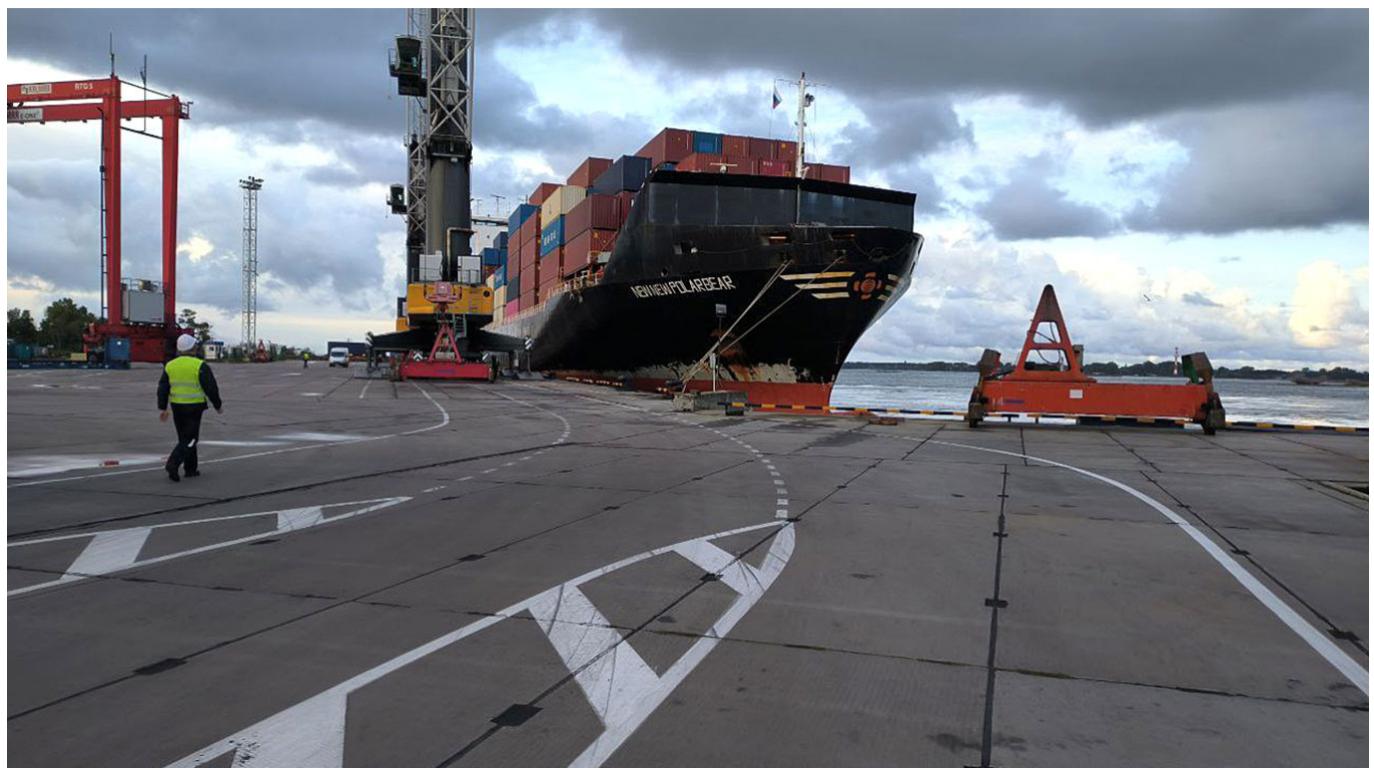


Kaliningrad Governor Says First Ship Arrives Via Arctic Sea Route

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The New New Polar Bear Cargo ship docked in Baltiysk. **Anton Alikhanov / Telegram**

Russia's western enclave of Kaliningrad on Friday received its first cargo ship via the Northern Sea Route, long touted by Moscow as an alternative shipping lane to the Suez Canal.

The vessel made a stop in the port town of Baltiysk while en route to St. Petersburg from Shanghai, Kaliningrad region Governor Anton Alikhanov [said](#) on the messaging app Telegram.

Alikhanov shared images of a docked ship carrying Chinese containers.

“It’s cheaper and faster than the Suez Canal,” he said.

Related article: [Gazprom Delivers LNG to China in Arctic Sea Route First](#)

Moscow has invested heavily in the Northern Sea Route as the Arctic warms disproportionately faster than the rest of the world and opens the strategic shipping route

connecting Europe and Asia to year-round navigation.

The route runs from the Arctic city of Murmansk in northwestern Russia to the Bering Strait in Russia's Far East.

President Vladimir Putin has ordered to boost annual shipments through the Northern Sea Route to 80 million metric tons by 2024.

In September, energy giant Gazprom [said](#) it made its first liquefied natural gas (LNG) deliveries to China via the route.

Private group Novatek, Russia's number two natural gas producer after Gazprom, used the same route to deliver LNG to China in 2018.

Kaliningrad, which is wedged between EU members Poland and Lithuania, has been [hit](#) by EU limits on the volume of transit goods as part of sanctions in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

AFP contributed reporting.

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